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ABSTRACT

The origin of Latino Studies is grounded in the experiences and status of U.S. Latinos. Ethnicity, culture, community, empowerment, and power relationships are intertwined themes in the discipline. Latino Studies has integrated an interdisciplinary approach to establish its corpus of knowledge and theories to explain and understand Latino experiences. The significant demographic growth of Latinos in the United States has created greater visibility and awareness of Latinos in this country, resulting in increased public discourse on policy issues such as: the urban concentration of Latinos; immigration patterns and impact; social status and mobility; labor force participation; language, culture and integration; and political development and incorporation. More specific to the discipline of political science, topics such as political participation or its lack, political incorporation, cultural maintenance and mobilization, organizational resource development, and coalition formation are contributing dialogues offered by Latino Studies scholars. Latino scholars challenge the prevailing paradigms as completely applicable to Latino populations, and press for wider inclusion and analysis of Latinos and their experiences in the American society. Latino Studies has established itself as an important area of inquiry, and the newer generation of Latino Studies scholars should build upon that legacy. (Contains 60 references.) (TD)

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Latino Studies and Political Science: Politics and Power Perspectives for Latino Communities and its Impact on the Discipline

by John A. Garcia
University of Arizona

Occasional Paper No. 34
December 1997

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Latino Studies and Political Science: Politics and Power Perspectives for Latino Communities and its Impact on the Discipline

by John A. Garcia
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Abstract:

The development of Latino studies over the past 25 years has focused on the examination, analysis, and expansion of the knowledge base of Latino origin persons and communities in the U.S.. Within the academy, questions of legitimacy as a focus of scholarly inquiry were confronted by Latino Studies scholars. While, the development of Latino Studies has established its tradition to include systematic analysis of the Latino experiences with a dimension of the application of the knowledge for social change and empowerment of the Latino community. This paper portrays the development of Latino Studies, particularly in the realm of politics, power, and policy. In this discussion, three themes will be developed: a) nature and development of Latino Studies over the past 25 years; b) development and impact of Latino scholars on the Political Science profession; and c) the impact of Latino Studies scholarship on the discipline of Political Science.

This paper was prepared for the Julian Samora Research Institute's conference on T ransforming the Social Sciences through Latino Studies held at Michigan State University, April, 1997.

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* *Research Reports:* **JSRI**'s flagship publications for scholars who want a quality publication with more detail than usually allowed in mainstream journals. These are edited and reviewed in-house. Research Reports are selected for their significant contribution to the knowledge base of Latinos.

* *Working Papers:* for scholars who want to share their preliminary findings and obtain feedback from others in Latino studies. Some editing provided by **JSRI**.

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* *Occasional Papers:* for the dissemination of speeches and papers of value to the Latino community which are not necessarily based on a research project. Examples include historical accounts of people or events, "oral histories," motivational talks, poetry, speeches, and related presentations.

Latino Studies and Political science: Politics and Power Perspectives for Latino Communities and its Impact on the Discipline

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The Julian Samora Research Institute is the Midwest's premier policy research and outreach center to the Hispanic community. The Institute's mission includes:

- *Generation of a program of research and evaluation to examine the social, economic, educational, and political condition of Latino communities.*
- *Transmission of research findings to academic institutions, government officials, community leaders, and private sector executives through publications, public policy seminars, workshops, and consultations.*
- *Provision of technical expertise and support to Latino communities in an effort to develop policy responses to local problems.*
- *Development of Latino faculty, including support for the development of curriculum and scholarship for Chicano/Latino Studies.*

Latino Studies and Political Science: Politics and Power Perspectives for Latino Communities and its Impact on the Discipline

The question of the transformation of the social sciences through the development of Latino Studies poses some very interesting lines of inquiry and discussions. Yet in this discussion of transformation, we will first try to outline the critical conceptual elements of Latino Studies. As our focus lies within the Social Sciences, specifically Political Science, this discussion centers around the general concepts of power, political processes, and decision-making. Therefore, this paper will be divided into two sections: a) theoretical and conceptual development of Latino Studies over the past 25 years; and b) the impact of Latino Studies scholarship on the intellectual development of Political Science.

Latino Studies[1] as a Field of Inquiry

The origins of Latino Studies lies with and remains connected to the realities and relationships of persons of Latino origin living in the United States. That is, the intellectual interests in the Latino communities have much of its basis on the identification, analysis and understanding of the Latino experience in the U.S. Inclusive in this inquiry are examinations of the historical antecedents of Latinos being part of the American socio-political system. For example, in the case of the Mexican origin population, the Mexican-American War in the 1840's represents the geographic incorporation of previous Mexican territory into the now, southwestern U.S. (Acuña, 1988; Barerra, 1979) The political and economic factors contributing to U.S.'s military actions with Mexico have been couched as expansionist and reflecting manifest destiny goals.

Similarly, Puerto Rican studies includes the historical conditions and factors that brought Puerto Rico under U.S. jurisdiction. In a more contemporary sense, the limitations, liabilities, and consequences of economic development, cultural maintenance, and political self-determination have been central areas of inquiry and analysis for Latino Studies scholarship (Rodriquez, 1989; Portes and Mozo, 1985; Thomas, 1967; 1978). In addition, the relationships and networks of Latinos residing in the U.S. with their counterparts in their country of origin serve as contributors of political socialization, political information and interest, and policy agendas. Finally, the role of formal institutions, processes and political actors all have fallen within the scope of Latino Studies.

As a result of these introductory observations, we can identify several "anchors" on which Latino Studies is grounded upon. They include: 1) analysis and examination of historical antecedents to the contemporary life of U.S. Latinos; 2) description and analysis of Latino communities as viable, active, and sustainable; 3) exploration of Latino communities in terms cultural maintenance, survival, and growth; and 4) examination of Latinos within the context of struggles, survival, and change within the U.S. socio-political system. The existence of Latino enclaves, barrios, colonias, etc., represent the arenas for the issues of viability and sustainability of communities of culture and common interests/experiences (Gomez-Quiñones, 1990; 1994).

Latino Studies: The Pragmatic and Theoretical

The examination of Latino communities begins with the cultural foundations of each of the Latino subgroups (i.e. Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Cubans, etc.). The definition of community, sociologically, experientially, and culturally, incorporates the dynamic nature of Latinos in the U.S. That is, how does the cultural foundations of history, one's native country, customs, values, and familial networks interact with prevailing mores, practices, values, and institutions of American society? The scope of the concept of community within a Latino Studies context includes the characterization of communities of culture and interests. At the same time, most of this research has been concentrated within specific Latino sub-communities (Jennings, 1977; Jennings and Rivera, 1984).

For example, research on the Mexican origin communities has placed significant attention on national origin identity and group labels. What meaning and interpretation is given to the specific choices of group labels like Chicano, or Mexicano, or Mexican-American? (Hirsch and Gutiérrez, 1973; Garcia, 1981) Does the persistence of an ethnic identity help

maintain a sense of community and/or isolate the Mexican origin community from the "larger" American society? What contributes (i.e socio-demographically, experientially, culturally, or social networks) to the development of an ethnic group identity, and its links to group behaviors? These lines of inquiry become critical concerns for Latino Studies scholars.

Latino Studies has both a pragmatic and a theoretical thrust in its foci of inquiries and analysis of Latino communities. Theoretical, in the sense of the construction of paradigms, concepts, and additional inter-relationships not only to explain and define the Latino experience; but the inter-relationships between structural factors and individual/group status. Latino Studies is pragmatic in the sense of connecting praxis as an integral part of thought and action. Inquiry is tied to the relevance, application, and importance to Latino communities and its future survival and growth.

An example of such a combination lies with the works involving the concepts of ethnicity/race, class, and gender (Pesquera and de la Torre, 1993; Cordova, et. al., 1986). In the case of ethnicity, much of the social science research has limited its conceptualization to merely an ascriptive characteristic (i.e. race and/or national origin/ancestry). In the area of Political Science, it was even more limited in terms of defining race/ethnicity in a two dimensional sense — Black and White communities (Dahl, 1962; Parenti, 1967). In research performed among Latino Studies, scholars have expanded the concept of ethnicity to include a more multi-dimensional perspective.[3] The concepts of bi-cognitive development, bi-culturalism, social networks and identity, culture (attitudes, values, and practices), ethnic affinity and behaviors, expand the theoretical and measurement dimensions of ethnicity.

Similarly, the concept of gender to include an orientation and social identity that is influenced by structural relations and social roles is an integral part of Latino Studies development (Montoya, 1996). The role of the state in defining power relations within a gendered context is augmented by the inclusion of culture, race/ethnicity and class (Dill and Baca-Zinn, 1994). That is, the analysis of the socio-political impact of gender is better understood by the intersection of Latino ethnicity (i.e. usually, within a national origin context), gender, and class status. Latino Studies scholars have generally referred to this intersection as "triple oppression" (Cordova, et. al., 1986). In addition, the sociological development of class into the strata of upper, working, and lower class groupings, or bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, and proletariat have been incorporated into Latino Studies scholarship(Barrera, 1979), Latino Studies scholars have addressed the dimensions of social networks, relationships of workers to decision-making, social identity and consciousness as members of a particular class. The theoretical import lies with the extent and nature of the intersection of race/ethnicity, class, and gender. At the pragmatic level, political mobilization and/or social involvement can be initiated or enhanced by the salience of race/ethnicity, class, and/or gender among Latinos. How do the dimensions of ethnicity or the strength of gender consciousness interact or contribute toward a participatory mode and specific kinds of social involvement?

The burgeoning research literature within Latino Studies represents an exponential growth within the humanities and the social sciences. The breadth of the works and the increasingly inter-disciplinary nature of the research is also characteristic of Latino Studies. The extraction and modification of extant literature and frameworks are drawn from many different disciplines (i.e. gender studies, economics, sociology, critical theory and literature), as well as diverse perspectives(Abalos, 1986; Delgado, 1994). In addition, the relevant literature is not restricted to U.S. based writings, nor focusing on Latinos exclusively. Globalization and analytical treatment of political-cultural empowerment, economic systems, economic policies, and social change have been integrated into Latino Studies' literature and research.

Major Contributions and Themes within Latino Studies

While these introductory comments serve to establish the presence and development of Latino Studies with some representative themes, which specifically, have been some major conceptual and analytical contributions to the discipline of Political Science? The first general contribution has been the "colorization/browning" of the U.S. in such a manner that the scholarly and general communities are more aware of the presence, contributions, and issues confronting the Latino communities. This occurred prior to the media's discovery of "Hispanics" during the

decade of the eighties. One of the dominant themes has been the significant growth rate of the Latino populations. The Bureau of the Census published a population projection of that 25% of the total U.S. in 2050 will be Hispanic. The portrayal of America as more multi-racial/ethnic and multi-cultural (i.e. a wide palette of diversity) than Black and White, has done much to expand both knowledge bases and perspectives. In a systematic way, Latino Studies has assembled stories about Latino communities (past, present and transforming) (Portes and Stepick, 1993; Croucher, 1997; Romo, 1983; Griswold del Castillo, 1979) in such areas as family, language and culture, gender roles, adaptation, cultural and political survival, cultural production, and political development.

Culture and Identity

The second major contribution of the Latino Studies is the work on the concept of community as intimately connected to the concept of culture and its production in terms trans-generational and transnational factors. That is, how does the cognitive and affective aspect of culture get perpetuated in a society in which the "dominant social and value milieu" is different and pervasive through popular culture, societal institutions, and the media. Latino Studies scholars view culture as dynamic, adaptive, and multi-dimensional. That is, cultural attributes and manifestations associated with one's home country are not identical with cultural life in the U.S. (Hurtado, 1994) For example, the integration of English words and phrases as part of Spanish language communication, represents an adaptation of both communication forms and vocabulary.

Latino scholars address their attention to the agents of cultural production, modes of transmission, as well as the manifestations and diversity within the Latino community (Montejano, 1987). For example, research on the Mexican origin community has identified significant variations in terms of Spanish language use and familiarity, cultural awareness, and cultural practices for holidays and cultural traditions. Works, such as Chicano Ethnicity (Keefe and Padilla, 1987) developed several dimensions of ethnicity to include: cultural knowledge; awareness; language preference and use; cultural heritage; cultural identification; ethnic social orientation; ethnic pride and interactions; and perceived discrimination. This type of work exemplifies the dynamic nature of culture and ethnicity; and how it can exhibit variations within the various national origin communities that comprise the larger Latino community. (Garcia, J. et al., 1991; Jones-Correa and Leal, 1996). Latino Studies scholarship critically examines and challenges longstanding concepts of assimilation, acculturation, and pluralism.

Concomitantly, the focus on social (i.e. ethnic identity) identity constitute a major area of research and theoretical development within Latino Studies (Garcia, J.,1980; 1982). Ethnicity is constructed as a process and product of an individual's sense of being. It is also a means by which one is attached and affiliated with a group (whether determined by class, race, ethnicity, gender, etc. or combination of several factors). The concepts of ethnic identification (i.e. process of developing a sense of ethnicity), ethnic identity (product of attaining a sense of identity), labeling, and ethnic group consciousness (evaluative dimension of assessing your group status and power relations in society) have been integral components in Latino Studies (Hurtado and Arce, 1987; Garcia, J., 1993). One theoretical contribution to the social sciences has been the conceptual formulation of multiple identities, as well as multiple "pathways" to Latino and national origin ethnicity. The idea of multiple identities reflects the interactions of class, gender, race, and ethnicity (Dill and Baca-Zinn, 1994). At times, these various identities complement or reinforce the other to activate political involvement for the Latino community or other aggregations of persons of color.

The focus on identity has been broadened to examine pan-ethnic identity and consciousness (Padilla, 1986; Garcia, et. al., 1991). That is, even though the reference to Latino Studies throughout this article portrays a panoramic view of the various Latino communities, the attention of scholars lies within specific Latino sub-communities (i.e. Mexican origin, Columbian, Puerto Rican, etc.). Thus the exploration of Latino identity and consciousness is a more recent development. Within this body of research comes the concept of situational identity. Social identity, whether gender, racial or ethnic based, has been formulated as endemic to an individual's formation of self. It tends to be introspective and personal. In contrast, the concept of situational identity incorporates the purposeful construction of a social identity with structural and strategic outcomes in mind.

Padilla's work (1986) on Latino consciousness develops the idea of the various members/leaders of Latino sub-groups in Chicago assisting in the development of a sense of being Latino, in addition to being Puerto Rican or Mexican or Cuban, etc. Situationally, there are utilities in broadening the community parameters across the Latino national origin groups, which include a larger population base and coalescing across common issues and concerns. In this manner, situational identity can be a personal affinity across national origin communities, and/or a strategic choice to characterize one's identity for mobilization and policy purposes.

Thus the areas of culture and identity within Latino Studies reflects one of its major foci, as well as contribution to the social sciences. The development of concepts, theories, and analysis of multiple social identities, the intersection of race/ethnicity, class, and gender, and newly constructed identities are significant intellectual and applied contributions. In addition, the role of social structures that influence culture and identity and the social construction of self within American society are contained within the research of Latino Studies scholars.

Defining and Exploring Community

Another area of discussion lies within the concept of community and sub-communities. In a direct way, our previous discussion of culture and identity is linked to Latino Studies and community. Defining community takes the forms of communities of culture and interest. For different Latino sub-groups, experiences and histories in the U.S. can be traced back for centuries (i.e. Mexican origin, Spanish), or chronicled for a few decades (i.e. Cubans, Guatamalans, Venezuelans).[3] As a result, social networks, organizational life, residential enclaves, migration patterns, and internal economies help define communities of culture. In addition, the bonds, rituals, and practices within each of the Latino communities served to establish particular group parameters (Velez-Ibanez,1996). What Latino Studies scholars examine are the factors that serve to maintain and perpetuate a community of culture. Such factors as immigration, social networks, residential concentration or "ethnic isolation," language use and loyalty, cultural contact with mother country, etc., serve to define the nature and dynamism of Latino cultures.

Characteristic of research in the area of community of culture has been the extensive ethnographic and historical accounts of Latinos (i.e. Mexican origin, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, etc.) in specific cities and towns (Portes and Stepick, 1993; Garcia, F.C., 1988; 1997). Works that account earlier historical periods function as chronicling the long standing presence and impact of specific Latino groups. The more contemporary community studies tend to accent the struggles and community networks that facilitate collective activities. These activities could be directed toward cultural events and ventures and/or community efforts to solve group problems/concerns. Community studies have been completed in Santa Barbara, east Los Angeles, south Texas, Detroit, Miami, and other communities throughout the U.S. As indicated earlier, Latino Studies scholars' examination of communities of culture are directed toward an understanding of cultural links, behaviors, values, and interactions that produce an "organic" nexus of common experiences and bonds.

The concept of community of interest has a corollary tie with the idea of community of culture. That is, Latino Studies research analyzes the dualistic themes of similarity and diversity within each Latino national origin community. Variations based on generational distance from one's mother country, Latino cultural practices and traditions, socioeconomic status and mobility, rural vs. urban residence are some bases for demographic, cultural, and class diversity (Rogler, et. al., 1980; Padilla, A., 1980). Thus, individuals and specific communities may not have the identical cultural bonds of community; yet possess similar experiences and conditions. Thus, research on communities of interest explores the experiences and situations that Latinos encounter with social-political and economic processes and institutions. Are there common experiences related to discrimination and prejudices, legal protections and/or vulnerabilities, or opportunities and/or obstacles (Pachon and DeSipio, 1994)?

For example, the legal status of many Latinos falls under that of immigrants or refugees. As a result, substantial research has been conducted on the causes and consequences of international migration on both sending and receiving communities (Hurtado, 1994). The distinctions between permanent resident aliens, naturalized citizens, undocumented immigrants, sojourners, and permanent underclass all

have ramifications for unifying or differentiating a possible community of interest. Does the workplace provide a common set of experiences (in terms of jobs, working conditions, wages, primary or secondary labor markets, stability of labor market participation, etc.) (DeAnda, 1996) for Latinos, irregardless of legal standing in the U.S.? Are the interests and status of native-born Latinos markedly different from the foreign-born segments?

While interests across the different Latino communities are seldom identical, research in this area serves to explore the critical linkages in the formulation of communities of interests, as well as the role of organizations and leadership to serve as catalysts and motivators for collective endeavors. The concept and focus on the nature of community within and between the Latino communities constitutes a significant dimension of scholarship, inquiry, and pragmatic research.

Social Structures and the Latino Community

We have woven throughout this article a theme that Latino Studies examines culture and experiences of Latinos in the U.S. Within this context, the analytical orientations tend to be focused on individual Latinos and interactions within their respective communities. At the same time, Latino Studies scholars understand the significance of engaging in macro-analysis of social structures (i.e. political, economic, social, and cultural institutions) that shape and influence the Latino community. In this manner, inquiries into socio-economic mobility, cultural adaptations, public policies such as "immigration reform," and labor market participation are not limited to an individual's attitudes and behaviors. As like other fields of inquiries, Latino Studies scholars seek to interrelate the interactions of individual circumstances, decision-making, motivations, and initiatives with the parameters or constraints of the social structures comprising the American system (Hero, 1992).

For example, many migration studies look at a person's decision to leave their country of origin as primarily a personal resolution and individual cost/benefit analysis. By broadening the theoretical perspective, factors such as the economic dependency between the Mexico and the U.S., "push and pull" factors (at both the country of origin and destination), and bilateral governmental agreements will influence individual decision-making.

Similarly, examination of Latinos' labor market experiences and mobility will be swayed by economic restructuring from manufacturing to service related economies, technology and automation, decline of unionization, exurbanization, and suburbanization of labor markets, and primary and secondary labor markets (deAnda, 1996). Latino Studies scholars have incorporated theoretical frameworks in which the establishment and function of social structures serve to understand and analyze the Latino community.

Mario Barrera's work, *Race and Class in the Southwest*, is illustrated of a structural analysis in which a Marxist framework of class divisions and defining economic relations explains the political and economic status of Mexican origin people in the southwestern United States. Class analysis, forces of economic growth, and political control are an integral part of the experiences of the primarily Chicano proletariat class. As a result, the concentration of Latino workers in particular jobs and industries are more fully understood by including the dimensions of social structures.

Within Political Science, analysis of electoral participation has included election systems at the local levels. The plurality, winner-take-all system, at-large elections, off-year, and non-partisan elections and multi-member districts are structural factors that have affected the number of Latino candidates (successful or not) in elections, racially polarized voting and campaigning, representation, and governmental responsiveness (de la Garza, et. al, 1996; 1994; 1988). These types of investigations and analysis have been instrumental in class action litigation in the area of voting rights and distribution of districts. The remedies of single member districts, cumulative or proportional voting schemes, and community of interest consideration in re-distribution of district plans all exemplify the integration of individual and structural factors as part of the directions of Latino Studies (Polinard and Wrinkle, 1994; de la Garza and DeSipio, 1993).

Empowerment and the Latino Community

The previous research areas have some common themes in which status and relations between the Latino community and socio-political institutions and processes are central theoretical and policy-related concerns. The examination of empowerment

is another critical area of emphasis within the Latino Studies literature. Themes of subordination, class oppression, capitalism, colonialization, institutional racism, and political alienation are a few of the frames of reference. Latino Studies serves for the examination of the power relations between the Latino community and the American political and economic system. Consistent with some of our earlier discussions, researchers conduct their inquiries at both the "micro" or individual and "macro" or systemic levels. At the individual level, initial efforts by Latino Studies scholars have been to "justify" the examination of Latinos as political participants. Only recently have social scientists, particularly Political Scientists, begun to acknowledge the presence and relevance of Latinos in the U.S. (de la Garza, et. al., 1992). In a very basic manner, one concrete contribution to the social sciences by Latino Studies scholars is confronting the academy for theoretical and analytical inclusion of Latino populations as pertinent for the study and understanding of American politics (McClain and Garcia, 1993).

Focus on the micro level aspects of Latinos and empowerment have dealt with matters of individual resources for participation and involvement, psychological orientations that facilitate or impede participation, political structures and processes, and linkages between individuals and organizations and leaders. The socioeconomic model of participation (i.e. impact of educational attainment, income level, and occupational status) served the predominant paradigm (Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba, et. al., 1995). Many studies strongly suggest the impact of socioeconomic status on types and levels of political involvement. For Latinos, these relationships have not been consistently as strong. The inclusion of group consciousness, ethnicity as an ascriptive variable or multi–dimensional indicators, and ethnic labeling have been contributions by Latino scholars toward the specification of critical factors for political involvement (Garcia, J. ,1997; Miyares, 1980). In addition to the inclusion of Latino or Chicano, Cuban, etc. identity, the distinction of foreign-born status serves as an added dimension of micro level analysis. Finally, Latino Studies scholars have emphasized the "dis-aggregation" of Latinos to insure analytical treatment of national origin subgroups. That is, Chicanos, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, etc. are the appropriate units of analysis rather than assuming ethnic groups status to the combination of all Spanish origin persons.

The empowerment process for Latinos also requires an examination of structural factors and conditions that influence the level and nature of political involvement or not. Within Political Science, this has been a traditional arena for exploration (i.e. voting systems, representation, eligibility requirements, etc.) (Hero, 1992; Garcia, J., 1997). Latino Studies scholars have focused on electoral systems, particularly at-large and/or multi-member districts and the consequences on Latino communities (de la Garza, et. al., 1992). Discussions regarding representation (various conceptions of representation and indicators) have dominated research activities. In addition, issues of re-distributing districts, voting rights legislation (both intent, practice, and impact), and identifying critical mass constituencies, have been incorporated within the research agenda of Latino scholars (de la Garza and DeSipio, 1993: DeSipio, 1996).

In the case of the latter point, in addition to the aggregation of a critical number of Latinos within the legislative district, other considerations include the sociodemographic characteristics of the population, political history of representation and participation, organizational density and activity level, voting patterns and racial/ethnic polarization, and size of the immigrant population. Since a substantial portion of the Latino community (excluding the Puerto Rican community), have high rates of non-citizenship, this becomes a critical dimension. The political integration of Latino immigrants constitutes an important area of inquiry for Latino Studies scholars. Again, an understanding of community (whether defined as culture, interest, or some other manner) is very inter-related to the question of political empowerment (Falcon, 1988).

Finally, the examination of political mobilization of Latinos comes within the scope of empowerment. Again the intersection of individual attributes and resources, social–political structures and processes, and the role of organizations and leadership are central in these analyses. At times, the research is replicative of extant concepts (i.e assimilation, acculturation, pluralism, etc.) and the inclusion of Latino respondents into the analysis. On other occasions, Latino Studies scholars have introduced different ways to conceptualize ethnicity or modify theoretical frameworks (i.e. Hero's (1992) two-tiered pluralism model or Barrerra's (1988) culture and integration model).

It is clear that empowerment of the Latino communities is oriented toward an understanding of further development of power status and favorable public policy outcomes.

Coalition Formation and Latinos

The combination of conceptualizing and operationalizing culture, ethnicity, and community, assist Latino Studies scholars in exploring the process and dynamics of empowerment. A more recent development in the field has been the interest in coalition formation. While Political Scientists have explored this topic, it has been more in the context of working agreements between political parties and/or interest groups. At the same time, sociologists and, political scientists, to a lesser degree, have examined coalitions within the context of social movements. Incentives, utility functions, resource bases, organizational and leadership networks, and a common policy agenda have been factors that influence coalition formation.

Again, the themes of community, culture, ethnicity, and empowerment serve as contributing "forces" to contemplate coalitions and their formation. For example, the social construction of Latinos (usually included as a situational ethnicity) represents some form of coalition building. Research has indicated that Latinos see themselves within the confines of their own national origin grouping. That is, Mexican origin, Salvadorans, Dominicans, Colombians, etc., see greater primacy within their own national origin grouping rather a larger social category of Hispanic or Latino. There has not been a strong "natural" affinity or aggregation among persons of Latino origins in the U.S. It is a construct that has arisen out of the U.S. experience and official designations by governmental agencies and the mass media. Thus, the pragmatic aspects of coalescing under a Latino grouping has the potential benefits of an even larger population base and a national presence.

At the same time, on what basis and what mechanisms do segments of the Latino community come together to work in greater unison? Recent work has focused on the nature and extent of interactions among different group of Latinos, at both the mass and elite levels (Sonenshein, 1993; Jackson and Preston, 1991). Results indicate that Latino cooperation is more evident at the elite level in a more utilitarian manner than necessarily reformulation of a new identity. Just as a multiplicity of identity dimensions have been developed, calculated and pragmatic decisions for joint efforts is becoming an established pattern for Latino activists.

The focus on coalition formation within Latino Studies is not limited to various Latino groups working together, but coalitions across communities of color and/or interests. The demographic growth of Latinos, nationally, and its increasingly urban concentration have ensued in greater political opportunities for cooperative ventures (Garcia, J., 1998). In cities like New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, Houston, and others, the Latino populations have reached critical size such that political empowerment can be enhanced by working coalitions. Initially, other communities of color (i.e. African-Americans, Asian-Americans) share similar struggles for increased political and economic power, as well as specific policy responses (Garcia, 1997). At the local level, municipal elections and politics, have become either a competitive battleground or cooperative opportunities between communities of colors (Sonenshein, 1993; Jackson and Preston, 199x). The examination of electoral coalitions or competition have been the primary areas of coalition research. More research is now being conducted in identifying and developing models on coalition formation. What are the barriers, obstacles, facilitative conditions and inter-personal factors that influence coalition formation? The future of empowerment and impact on the policy-making process and outcomes will be affected by the ongoing successes of coalitions.

Latino Studies and the Social Sciences

In this presentation on the development of Latino Studies, I have tried to provide some context in which this field has based its foci and interests. It has been suggested that the origin of Latino Studies is grounded in the experiences and status of Latinos in the U.S. There is academic strand in its theoretical development and explanation to intertwine ethnicity, culture, community, empowerment, and power relations for specific Latino groups. Secondly, there is also a clear "strand" of pragmatic and applied use of knowledge, analysis, and understanding to effect the Latino condition. Finally, the development of Latino Studies has integrated a multi or inter-disciplinary approach to establish its corpus of knowledge and theories. Using the arts, history, other fields in the

humanities, and the social sciences, Latino Studies have melded together concepts, models and perspectives to explain and understand Latino experiences. For the most part, this field really constitutes several fields of study in which the parameters are defined by national origin grouping (i.e. Chicano studies, Puerto Rican studies, Cuban studies, etc.).

The significant demographic growth of Latinos in the U.S. has served as a more recent "jumping off" point to develop the field further. Projection of one of every four Americans being Latino by 2050 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997) has placed greater visibility and awareness of Latinos in this country. Partially, as a result, information, perspectives, and issues for Latinos get more place in arenas of public discourse. Apparent policy arenas include: the urban concentration of Latinos; immigration patterns and impact; social status and mobility; labor force participation; language, culture and integration; and political development and incorporation. More specific to the discipline of Political Science, topics such as political participation or its lacking, political incorporation, cultural maintenance and mobilization, organizational resource development, and coalition formation are contributing dialogues offered by Latino Studies scholars.

I have tried to identify five major themes of conceptual and analytical import in the development of Latino Studies. They are: culture and identity, community, social structures, empowerment, and coalition formation. This is not exhaustive of the content areas within Latino Studies, but intended to weave critical domains toward the understanding and analysis of the Latino communities. Just as important, has been the dialogues and, at times, confrontive, debates by Latino Studies scholars to challenge the prevailing paradigms as completely applicable to Latino populations. Similarly, voices that press for wider inclusion and analysis of Latinos and their experiences in the American society.

Public policy continues to be a primary focus and concern by Latino Studies scholars such that policy agenda formation and impact have a vital role for the future of Latino communities (Garcia, J., 1995). Initially, the number of voices that raised the domains of Latino Studies was small. Yet the number and decibel level of these voices has increased over the last 25 years. It has pushed the social science disciplines to be more inter-disciplinary oriented and less myopic in terms of relevant populations and limited cultural perspectives. Latino Studies scholars are very active and committed to intellectual inquiry and pragmatic application of knowledge on matters pertinent to the Latino community. Even though the core elements of the discipline, both academicians and substantive areas of inquiry, have been less interested in the substantive core of Latino Studies, the field has grown and flourished. It has come a long way in terms of improving quality, innovative thought and approaches, stringent replication of mainstream concepts and hypotheses, expanding variables and perspectives, and raising alternative considerations and relationships. Latino Studies has established itself as an important area of inquiry and the newer generation of Latino Studies scholars should build upon that legacy.

Endnotes

1. The use of the term Latino Studies encompasses schloarship and curricula activities that includes a focus on the Mexican origin, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Latino origin groups living in the United States. At the same time, initial developmetns in scholarship dealt mostly with Chicano studies in the Southwest.

2. It is not the intent of the author to suggest that only Latino Studies scholars have contributed to the expansion of race/ethnicity. More so, the intent is to illustrate the major areas of focus and concentration.

3. Our identification of the established presence and dynamic nature of community within the United States includes an implicit distinction of a critical mass of the specific Latino sub-group mentioned.

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